

# OKLAHOMA COURT FUND COLLECTIONS

George W. Lindley, Chairman  
Court Fund Collections Committee

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## PREFACE

The Court Fund Collection Project was originally instituted to enhance enforcement of court ordered sanctions and to improve funding for the state court system. Of the 77 counties in Oklahoma, 43 are now actively involved in the process.

Prior to introduction of the project, total collections had stabilized at, approximately, \$35 million dollars per fiscal year. Within four years of implementation, total collections had increased by \$58 million over expected returns. 3(1) OCFC Rep. 1 (1991). In fiscal year 2001-2002,

affected by local court fund spending.

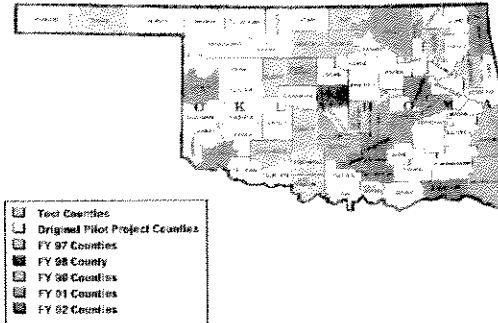
unless collections are increased. Fortunately, the Supreme Court recently issued instructions to proceed with the inclusion of all remaining counties within the next three years at a cost of, approximately, \$500,000. 4 OCFC Rep. 4 (2003 ).

The counties presently outside the program vary, greatly, in size, experience and vision. They include

urban courts, such as Muskogee (pop. 69,300) and rural courts the size of Cimarron (pop. 3,000). Some of the counties are already successful collectors, such as Cotton and Latimer, others are not. As noted in the past, the mindset of the collection personnel, in particular, the mindset of the judge, is the most important factor in successful collecting.

Substantial gains in the first year of the program are not

necessarily the norm. Long term gains are one of the crucial aspects of the collection program -- some improvement usually

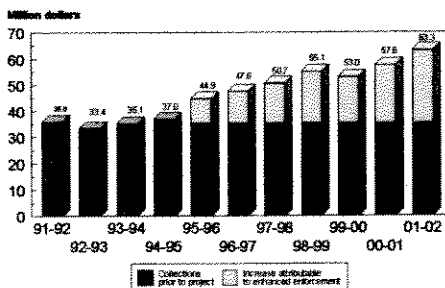


In 2000, the Judiciary's Long Range Planning Committee had determined to add ten counties to the project every year until the entire state was covered. However, because of budget and time constraints, the numbers recruited have been limited. In 2002, for instance, only six counties were trained and the collection results were varied.

Presently, court-generated funds are expected to cover 80% of the expenses necessary to maintain the court operations.

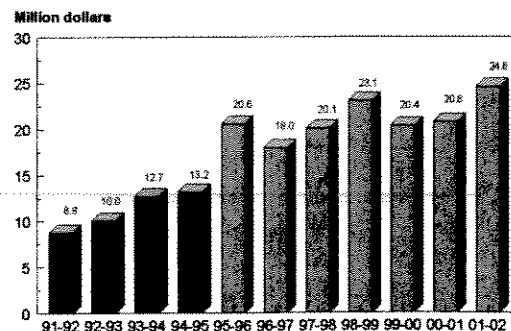
New cost increases are expected to raise \$9 million, but continuing budgetary pressures will put the courts at risk

## STATEWIDE TOTAL COLLECTIONS



collections reached a high of \$63.3 million. In addition, the courts now consistently contribute between \$20 million and \$24.6 million a year into the State Judicial Fund. Of course, the actual impact of the project contribution is impossible to ascertain in relation to the Judicial Fund since totals are randomly

## STATE JUDICIAL FUND



occurs initially, but substantial gains show up over a longer period of collecting. As time passes, assigned personnel will hone their skills while achieving institutionalization of the system. It is not unreasonable to predict that the Judicial Branch, with conservative budgeting, might eventually collect sufficient monies to become internally self-funded. However, if the Legislature wishes to maximize the results of the project and provide for its continued maintenance, consideration should be given to funding the position created by 20 O.S. § 80 (Supp. 2002). Without a directing Judge, Committee services will be severely stretched by the requirements of managing the efforts of 75 counties.

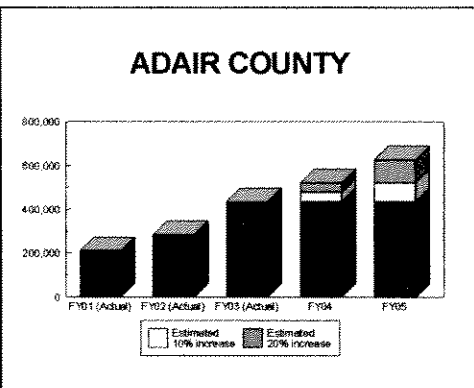
Of course, self-funding is not the primary object of the Committee. While increased collections is a welcome by-product of the project, we are not trying to become a fee court. The primary aim of the program is to become an institution that strives to install responsibility by holding people accountable for their misdeeds. Secondly, our system attempts to reduce correction costs by instituting a fine-based alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenses.

### FY04 Counties

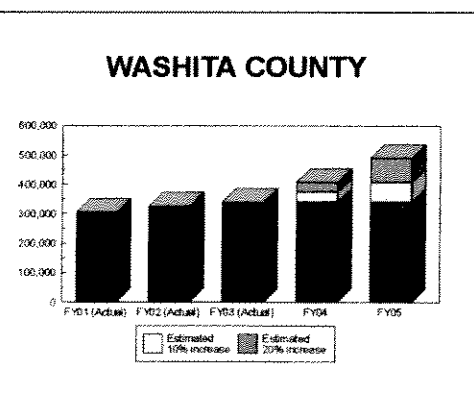
Eleven counties have been targeted for training in fiscal year 2004. Selection criteria include need, population and desire.

Adair County, in the East Central Judiciary Administrative District, has a current population of 21,361. OCIS data indicate their average total collections for the past three fiscal years to be only

\$266,893, with budget needs of \$206,505. Statistical data compiled by the Oklahoma Criminal Justice Resource shows that 67 felony convictions occurred in calendar year 2001, with an average fine of \$209 a case, and a median of \$0.00. The accompanying chart anticipates the results of a 10% and 20% increase.

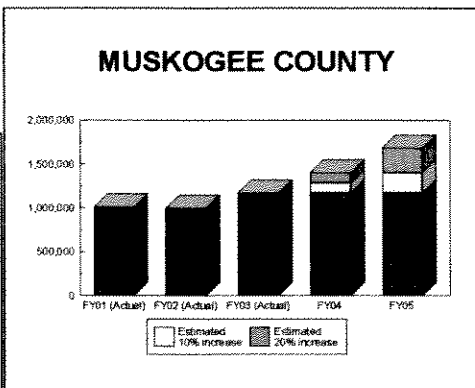


Washita County, in the Southwest Judicial District, has a population of 11,454. OCIS data discloses an average fiscal year collection of \$325,428, with fiscal year 2004 budget needs of only \$187,760. Out of 44 convictions in 2001, the court's fines averaged \$802.27 a case, with the median fine being \$200.00.

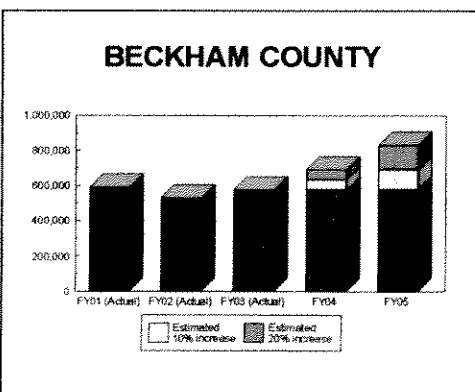


Muskogee County, one of our larger population centers at 69,979, is, like Adair, in the East Central District. Their collections now average \$1,056,797 per fiscal year, with an approved budget of

\$1,102,296 for fiscal year 2004. Obviously, immediate enhancement is needed in collections. Presently, the court fines in felony cases have been averaging only \$340.90 per case with a median fine of \$0.00.



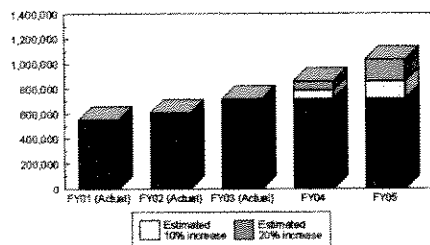
Beckham County, in the Northwest Judicial Administrative District, has a current population of 19,868. The last three years of collections averaged \$567,011 per fiscal year, and this year's budget reflects that they will need \$477,104 to operate. Felony fines averaged \$689.42 in calendar year 2001, while the median fine was \$0.00.



Custer County, also in the Northwest Judicial District, has a population of 25,188. They have been averaging collections of \$627,681 and need \$404,506 for 2004 operations. Their average felony fines are only \$72.49 per case, and, in at least half the felony

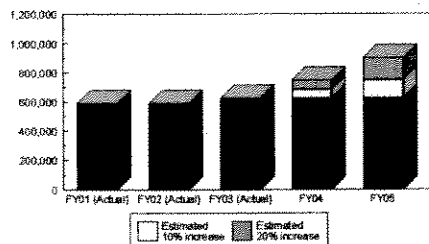
convictions, no fines are levied at all.

### CUSTER COUNTY



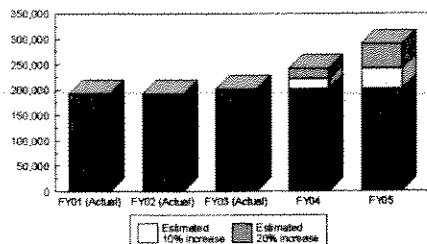
Logan County, with a population of 34,527, is in the North Central Judicial District. Their average collections are now \$601,675, with budgetary needs of \$489,215. Average fines are \$2,154.60, but fines are imposed in only 50% of the cases.

### LOGAN COUNTY

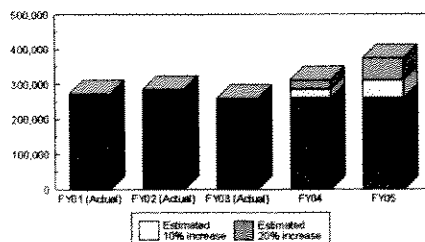


Pushmataha, in the Southeast District, has a county population of 11,704, and average collections of \$195,657. With a 2004 budget of \$160,449, the courts need their average fine of \$7.58 per case!

### PUSHMATAHA COUNTY

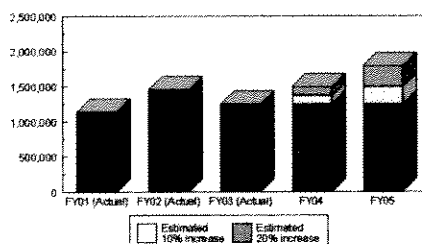


### LOVE COUNTY



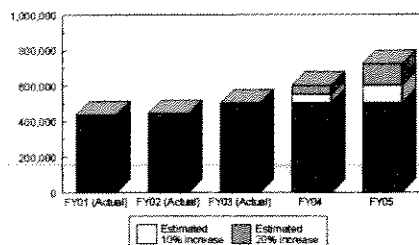
Love County, with a population of 8,911, is located in the South Central Judicial District. Their average collections are \$273,405, but they only need \$133,048 to operate. Average felony fines are \$641.32, but less than half of the felonies receive a fine at all.

### PAYNE COUNTY



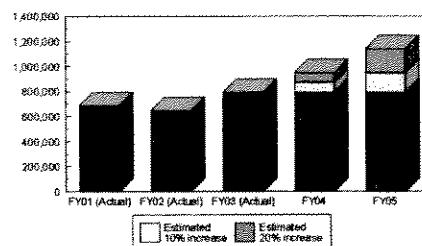
Payne County rivals Muskogee in size at 69,915. Their present collections average \$1,279,932, with expenditures of \$742,446. Felony fines have been averaging \$279.35, but are assessed in less than half of the cases.

### LINCOLN COUNTY



Lincoln County, another in the North Central Judicial District, has a population of 32,264. They collect an average of \$462,918 a year, but need \$437,553 to operate the court system. Felons presently face an average fine of \$837.95 and a median fine of \$250.00.

### WAGONER COUNTY

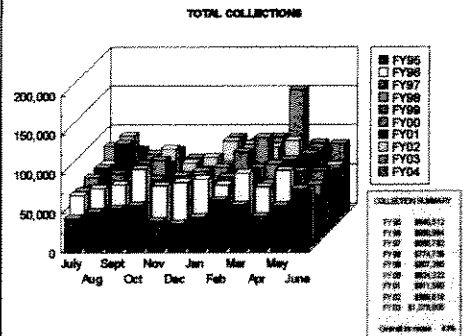


Our last county on the list, Wagoner, is in the East Central Judicial District and has a population of 60,339. Collections average \$709,686 and the budget needs are \$585,919. The court imposes an average fine of only \$266.96, and imposes no fine in over half the cases.

## STATUS OF CURRENT PROJECT COUNTIES

### Original Counties

### BRYAN COUNTY

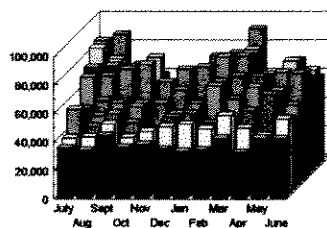


Bryan County, with a population of 34,690, collected just

over \$640,000 the year before beginning the collection program. In FY03, total collections were over \$1.1 million. Judge Farrell Hatch attended the very first training session, and has helped with subsequent training seminars. Court Clerk Sandy Stroud and former Cost Administrator Joy Eppler have both been involved with the program for several years, and handle the program knowledgeably and capably. The new C.A. is Melissa McCreary.

### CADDO COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



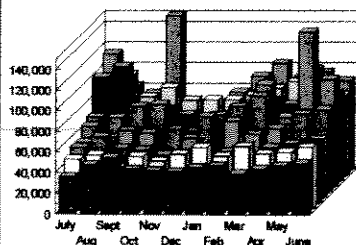
■ FY95  
■ FY96  
■ FY97  
■ FY98  
■ FY99  
■ FY00  
■ FY01  
■ FY02  
■ FY03  
■ FY04

COLLECTION SUMMARY	
FY95	\$449,000
FY96	\$450,000
FY97	\$450,000
FY98	\$450,000
FY99	\$450,000
FY00	\$450,000
FY01	\$450,000
FY02	\$450,000
FY03	\$450,000
FY04	\$450,000
Overall Increase: 100%	

Another of our original counties, Caddo County never lost ground when Court Clerk Sharon Winchester retired and was replaced by Judy Cain. Caddo's total collections increased from \$449,000 in FY95, to over \$863,000 in FY03 – with a county population of only 30,980. Judge John Herndon and C.A. Jerrie Moran have made Caddo County one of the most successful collection counties in the state.

### CANADIAN COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



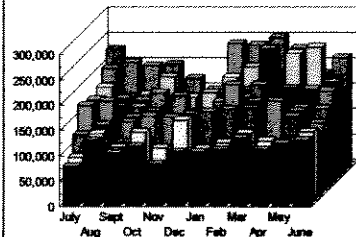
■ FY95  
■ FY96  
■ FY97  
■ FY98  
■ FY99  
■ FY00  
■ FY01  
■ FY02  
■ FY03

COLLECTION SUMMARY	
FY95	\$535,000
FY96	\$535,000
FY97	\$535,000
FY98	\$535,000
FY99	\$535,000
FY00	\$535,000
FY01	\$535,000
FY02	\$535,000
FY03	\$535,000
Overall Increase: 55%	

Canadian County is one of the old "mainframe" counties. As such, they suffered through a tough transitional period in 2000. They never faltered in their collection efforts, however, and have increased total collections from \$535,000 in FY95 to over \$1.1 million in FY03. Court Clerk Sharon Dill recently retired, and new Court Clerk Dee Ray is dedicated to continuing the program, as are Judge Edward Cunningham and C.A. Loretta Andersen. With a population of 85,460, Canadian County still has much potential in the collections department.

### CLEVELAND COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



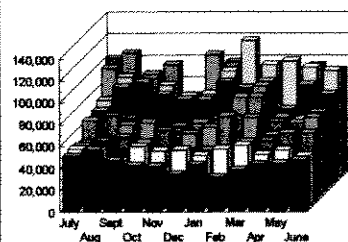
■ FY95  
■ FY96  
■ FY97  
■ FY98  
■ FY99  
■ FY00  
■ FY01  
■ FY02  
■ FY03  
■ FY04

COLLECTION SUMMARY	
FY95	\$1,300,000
FY96	\$1,300,000
FY97	\$1,300,000
FY98	\$1,300,000
FY99	\$1,300,000
FY00	\$1,300,000
FY01	\$1,300,000
FY02	\$1,300,000
FY03	\$1,300,000
FY04	\$1,300,000
Overall Increase: 100%	

Judge Bill Hetherington and former Court Clerk Charlotte Reynolds were members of the original Court Collection Committee. With a population of 201,110, Cleveland County has seen an increase in total collections from \$1.3 million in FY95, to \$2.5 million in FY03. Court Clerk Rhonda Hall, along with Cost Administrators Robin Clifford and Cynde Robertson, work closely with Judges Hetherington, Lucas, Gaston and Ring to make the program successful.

### MAYES COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



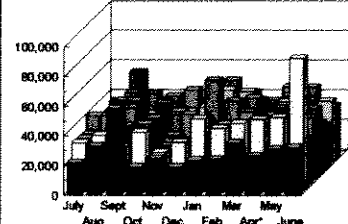
■ FY95  
■ FY96  
■ FY97  
■ FY98  
■ FY99  
■ FY00  
■ FY01  
■ FY02  
■ FY03  
■ FY04

COLLECTION SUMMARY	
FY95	\$521,000
FY96	\$521,000
FY97	\$521,000
FY98	\$521,000
FY99	\$521,000
FY00	\$521,000
FY01	\$521,000
FY02	\$521,000
FY03	\$521,000
FY04	\$521,000
Overall Increase: 50%	

Another small county (population 37,530) that has enjoyed huge success, Mayes County has increased collections from \$521,000 in FY95, to \$1.1 million in FY03. After a slow start early on, Court Clerk Karin Garland hired Joni Hauenstein as Cost Administrator, and years of success followed. Judge Gary Dean and current C.A. Rhonda True have continued the accomplishments of the past.

### OKFUSKEE COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



■ FY95  
■ FY96  
■ FY97  
■ FY98  
■ FY99  
■ FY00  
■ FY01  
■ FY02  
■ FY03  
■ FY04

COLLECTION SUMMARY	
FY95	\$449,000
FY96	\$449,000
FY97	\$449,000
FY98	\$449,000
FY99	\$449,000
FY00	\$449,000
FY01	\$449,000
FY02	\$449,000
FY03	\$449,000
FY04	\$449,000
Overall Increase: 100%	

In spite of the fact that Okfuskee County has a population of only 11,400, it has one of the most efficient collection programs in the state. Court Clerk Kay Adams and Cost Administrators Patricia Swayze and Mary Crawley work closely with Judge David Martin, who is an enthusiastic collection judge and a welcome participant at most training seminars. Their first year in the program, total collections in



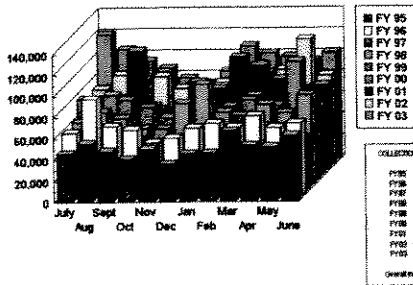
Okfuskee County jumped from \$346,000 to over \$516,000, and remain consistently upwards of \$450,000.

Vann as C.A. In spite of the fact that Sequoyah County has a population of only 37,530, their collections have grown from FY95's \$328,000, to over \$964,000 in FY02.

year before beginning the program. In FY03, their collections were \$590,000. Court Clerk Jenny Hopkins and C.A. Angela Irvin run the program, with the help of Judge Joseph Marak.

### PITTSBURG COUNTY

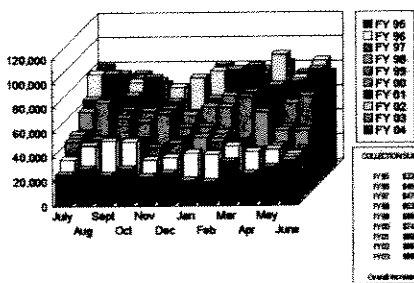
TOTAL COLLECTIONS



Collections rose from just under \$600,000 in FY95 to over \$1.1 million in FY03 in Pittsburg County, which has a population of 42,431. While the first two Cost Administrators lasted a fairly short period of time, Cindy Eller settled into the job and has remained, working with Court Clerk Linda Price Williams and Judge Jim Bland to make the program a success.

### SEQUOYAH COUNTY

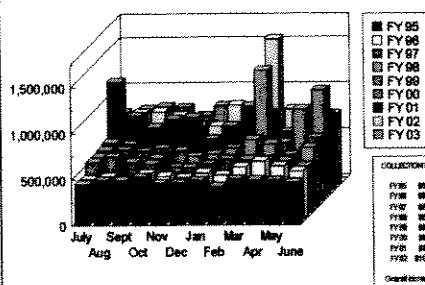
TOTAL COLLECTIONS



Judge Dennis Sprouse is one of the most ardent supporters of the program, and a permanent fixture at training seminars. Court Clerk Bernell Edwards attributed the program's success, in part, to the fact that her first C.A., Maudine Vann, had been a longtime deputy court clerk. Amanda Adams has now successfully replaced Ms.

### TULSA COUNTY

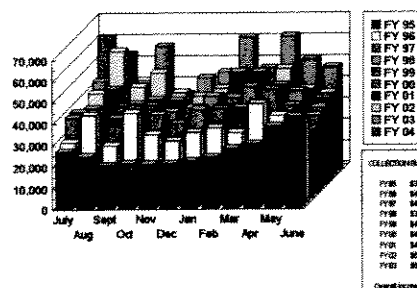
TOTAL COLLECTIONS



Tulsa County has not just one or two C.A.'s, but a whole cadre of them, supervised by Ann Thomas. Court Clerk Sally Howe-Smith was a member of the original Court Collections Committee. She and Deputy Court Clerk Rita Allen implemented the program in Tulsa County, which was the first large county to participate. Judge Millie Otey is the latest judge to supervise the program. Collections have risen from \$5.6 million in FY95 to over \$10 million in FY02.

### WOODWARD COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS

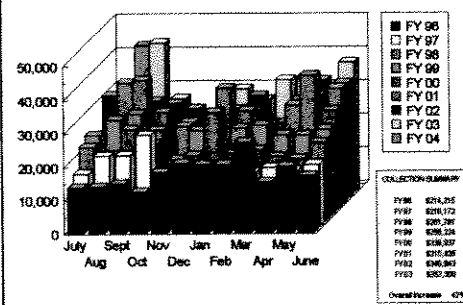


Woodward County, with a population of only 18,550, collected just over \$322,000 the

## FY97 & FY98 Counties

### BLAINE COUNTY

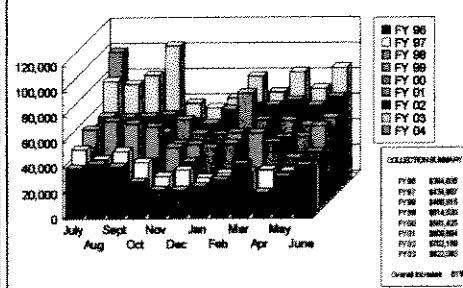
TOTAL COLLECTIONS



Court Clerk Rebekah Haney and Cost Administrator Virginia Edsall, with the help of Judge Mark Moore, run the collection program in Blaine County. Their collections in FY96, before implementation of the program, were \$214,000. In FY03, they collected over \$360,000, in a county whose population is only 10,510.

### CHEROKEE COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS

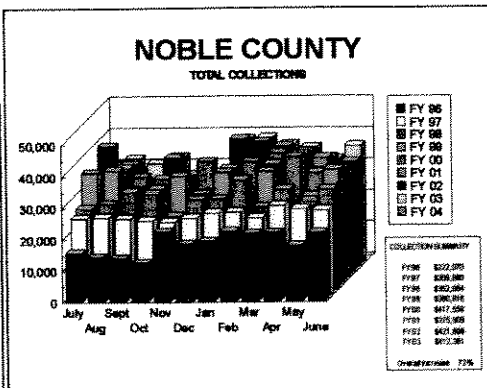
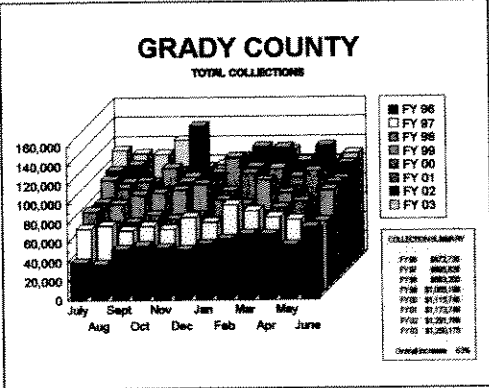
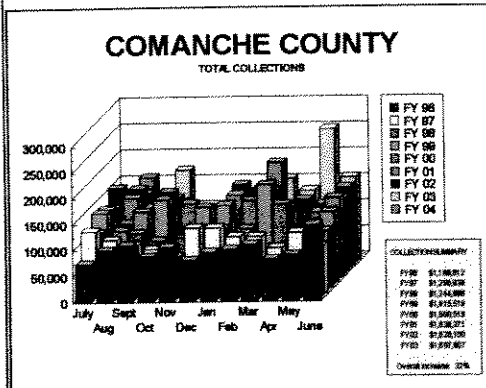


Cherokee County also began the program in FY97. Collections in FY96 were

\$384,000. FY03 collections were over \$922,000 – more than double the FY96 total. New Court Clerk Shirley Glory and Cost Administrator Charlotte Davis work with Judge Mark Dobbins to run the program in this county of 39,140.

training seminars. Collections have increased from \$469,000 in FY96 to over \$858,000 in FY02. Sharon Melrose is the Court Clerk and Cheri Bonnett recently took over the job of Collection Administrator in this county of 56,860.

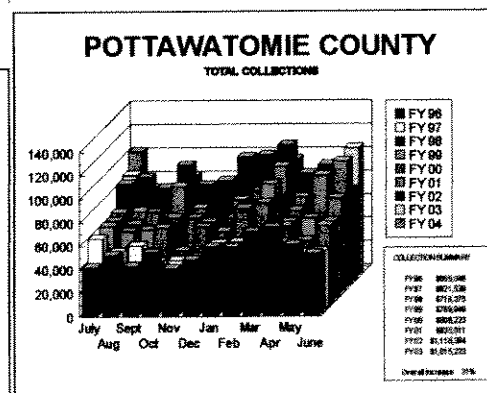
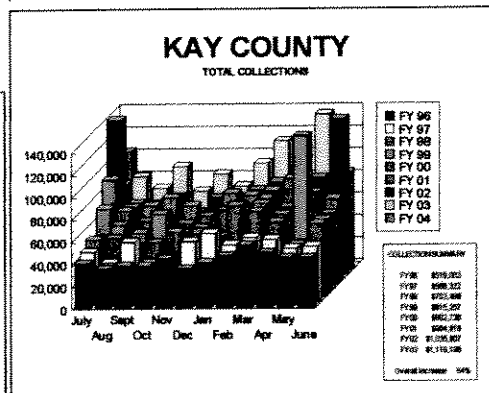
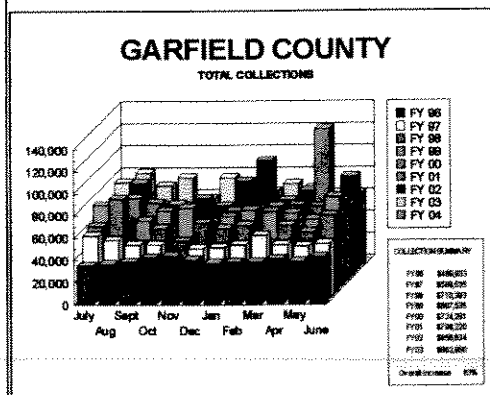
from \$513,000 in FY96 to over \$1.1 million in FY03. Judge D.W. Boyd supervises the collection program, working with C.A. Marilee Bellinghausen.



The fourth largest county in the state (population 113,510), Comanche County has increased collections from \$1.1 million in FY96, to almost \$1.7 million in FY03 – even though they had a strong collection background due to the influence of longtime District Judge Jack Brock. Judges Mark Smith and Allen McCall now oversee the program, assisting Court Clerk Joan Williams and C.A.s Judy Kendall and Kelly Blasengame.

Grady County implemented the collection program when Justice Winchester was District Judge there. Court Clerk Glenda Fenimore and C.A. Traca Gonzales have seen collections increase from just over \$672,000 in FY96 to over \$1.2 million in FY02 and FY03. Judges Richard Van Dyck and Timothy Brauer currently handle collection matters in this county of 45,930.

Considering its small population (11,430), Noble County has enjoyed amazing collection success. Court Clerk Marilyn Mills was a member of the original Collection Committee, and assists with all training seminars, as did former C.A. Kathy Wiseman and current C.A. Hillary Vorndren. Supervised by Judge Dan Allen, collections for Noble County have grown from \$222,000 in FY96 to over \$420,000 in FY02.



Judge Gary Maxey has participated as a panelist in past

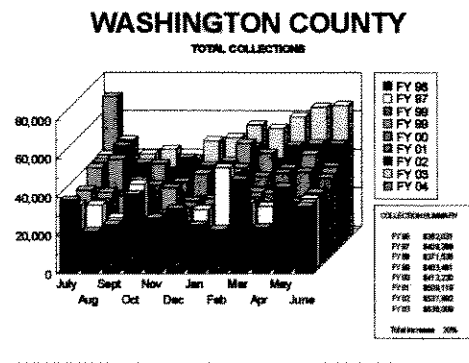
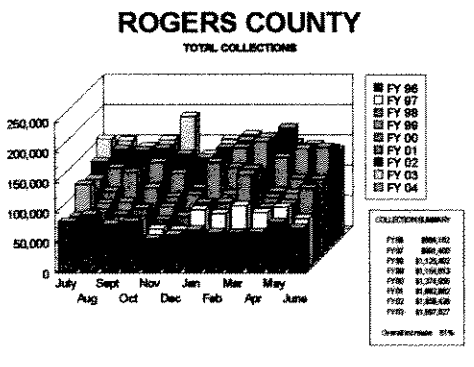
Glenda Emerson, Kay County Court Clerk, has two offices to supervise. This county of 46,700 has seen collections rise

Pottawatomie County, with a population of 62,240, started the collection program less than auspiciously. However, Court Clerk Cecil Dunlap and C.A. Ronda Guinn have seen collections

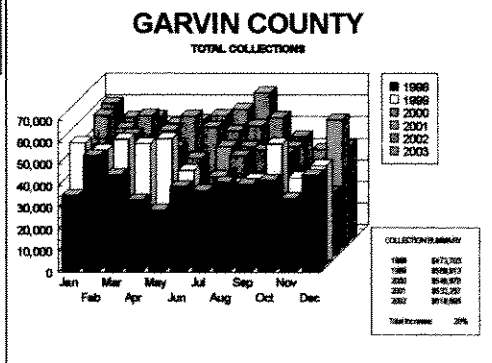
increase from the FY96 total of \$655,000 to over \$1.1 million in FY02. Judge Douglas Combs assists with collection matters.

program, with help from Judges Greg Zigler and Ryan Reddick.

current figures suggest that the increases will be even more. Judge Roma McElwee handles collection matters, and Court Clerk Patricia Presley has several Cost Administrators, who work under supervisor Teresa Davis.



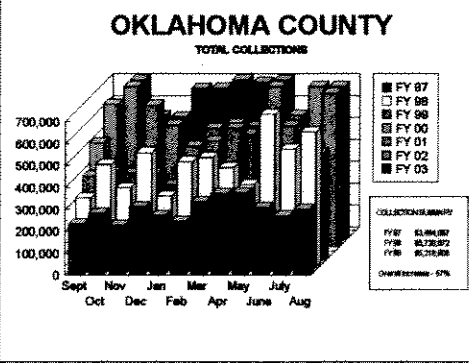
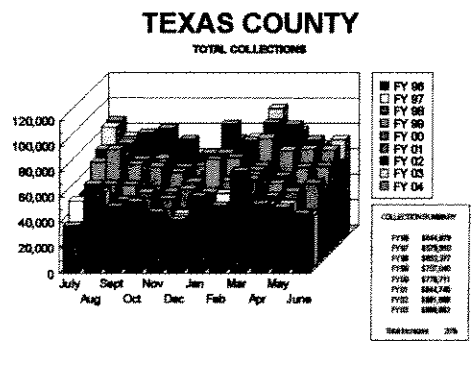
## FY99 Counties



Rogers County started the collection program at a time when their population and caseload were rising rapidly. As a result, Court Clerk Candi Czapansky and longtime C.A. Shirley Romine have seen collection increase from \$894,000 in FY96 to almost \$1.8 million in FY03. Judge Joe Smith oversees the collection program in this county, whose population is 68,130.

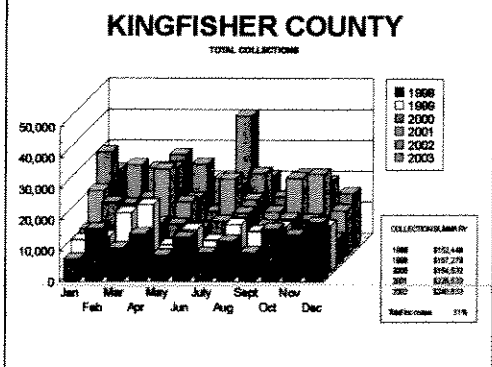
Washington County, population 47,520, faltered some at the beginning of the collection program. However, the last two years have produced success, and collections are up from \$392,000 in FY96 to \$636,000 in FY03. Court Clerk Rosalie Cowan and C.A. Karen Franco run the program, assisted by Judges Janice Dreiling and Curtis DeLapp.

Garvin County's first year in the collection program was very strong, but they dropped off slightly the next couple of years. However, their 2002 collection total of \$618,000 is still an improvement over 1998's \$473,000, and 2003 is on track to be even more successful. Judge Richard McClain, Court Clerk Mary James and C.A. Cindy Ray work together to make the program work in this county of 27,040.



This panhandle county has a population of only 18,640. However, collections in Texas County are up from \$645,000 in FY96 to over \$960,000 in FY02. Court Clerk Karen Parish and C.A. Cheryl Brooks administer the

Oklahoma County was the only county to come into the program in FY98, and a separate training seminar was held for them alone. Problems with the computer conversion in FY00 caused accounting nightmares for them, and they are still in the process of reporting. However, their first two years in the program produced a 57% increase in collections, and





With a population of only 13,530, Kingfisher County has seen collections increase from \$152,000 in 1998, to \$240,000 in 2002. Court Clerk Yvonne Dow and C.A. Chesca Meeker work closely with Judge Susie Pritchett to administer the program.

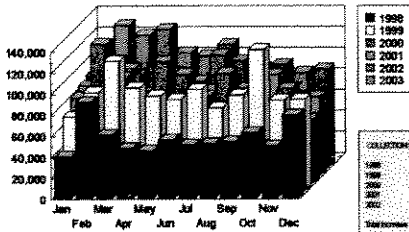
The two years subsequent, they have fallen off somewhat, but with the help of the warrant intercept program, they seem to be back on track. Judge Noah Ewing oversees the collection program for Court Clerk Lynda Baker and C.A. Ida Walck.

1999's \$686,000, but still higher than the total of \$406,000 collected in 1998. Judge Joseph Wrigley oversees the collection program in this county of 24,770.

## FY01 Counties

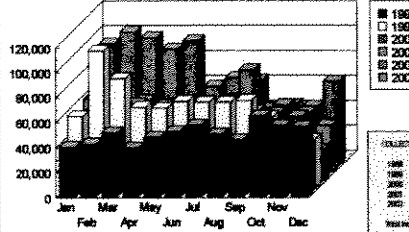
### LEFLORE COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



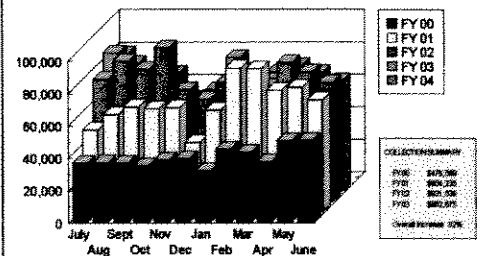
### MCCURTAIN COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



### DELAWARE COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



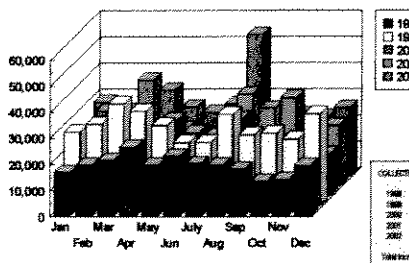
LeFlore County started strongly in the program, with an increase the first year from 1998's total of \$689,000, to \$1.1 million in 1999. Collections in 2002 were almost \$969,000. Court Clerk Melba Hall has two Cost Administrators, Debbie McClain and Glenna Barnes. Judge Michael Lee handles the collection program for this county of 46,560.

McCurtain County Court Clerk Vicki Justus and C.A. Judy Jones saw an increase their first year in the program from \$603,000 to \$811,000. However, a decline in caseload has severely hampered their collection efforts. Judge John DeWitt handles collection matters in this county of 34,686.

Delaware County, with a population of 34,150, has shown an amazing increase in the three years it has been in the collection program. FY02 collections were over \$931,000, compared to \$476,000 in FY00. Judge Alicia Littlefield works with Court Clerk Caroline Weaver and Cost Administrator Mary Killion to make the collection program successful.

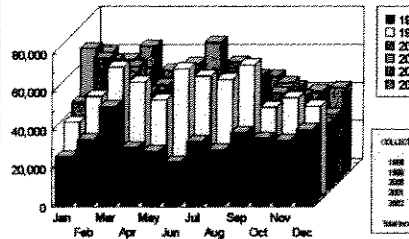
### MCCLAIN COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



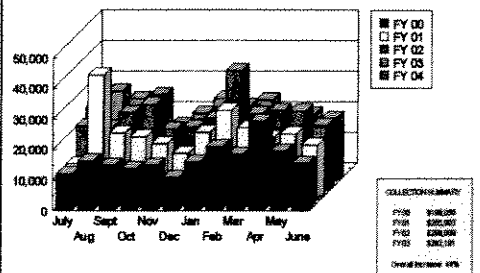
### SEMINOLE COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



### HUGHES COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS

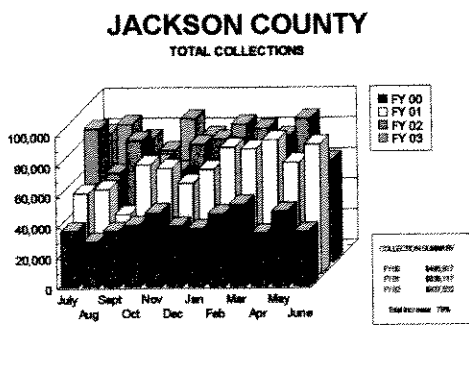


McClain County (population 26,220) increased their collections from \$229,000 to \$365,000 their first year in the

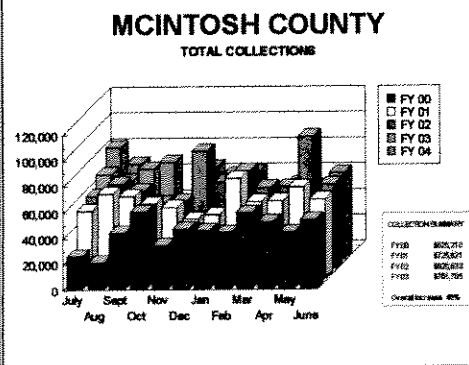
Seminole County Court Clerk Sharon Post and C.A. Kathy Smith have had to deal with declining case filings over the past two years. As a result, collection totals are down somewhat from

Even though Hughes County has only 14,089 residents, Court Clerk Shirley Harkey and C.A. Laurie Mathis have seen collections increase from \$199,000 in FY00 to \$299,000 in FY02.

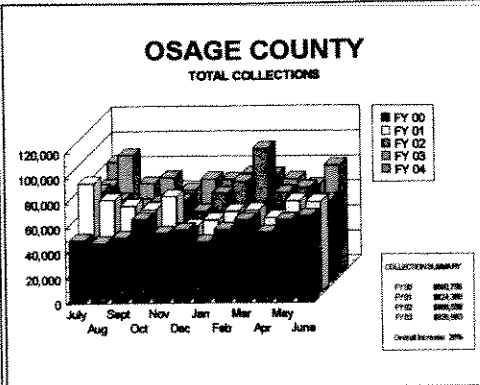
Judge Joseph Wrigley administers the collection program in Hughes County as well as Seminole County.



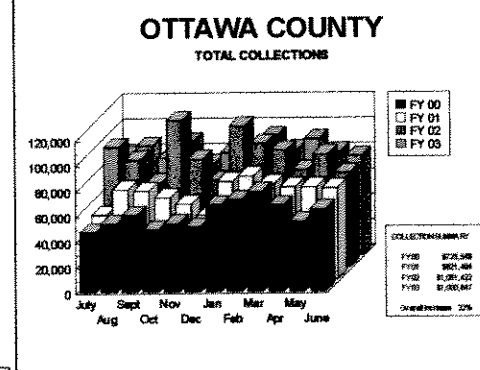
Judge Richard Darby handles collection matters in Jackson County, but all the judges there are dedicated to the collection program. Court Clerk Sonya Tutten recently moved former misdemeanor clerk Jeanne Freeland to the position of Cost Administrator. Collections in this county of 28,770 are up from \$496,000 in FY00 to over \$937,000 in FY02.



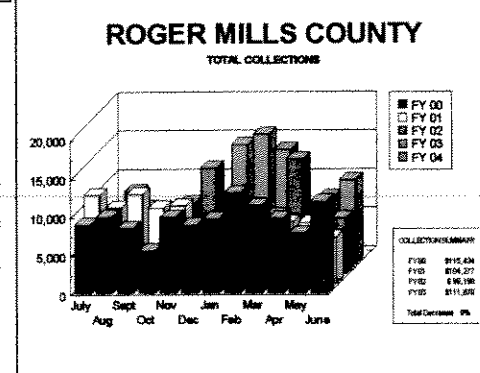
McIntosh County, population 19,050, increased collections from \$525,000 in FY00 to \$820,000 in FY02. Judge Gene Mowery assists Court Clerk Jane Johnson and C.A. Carrie Pittman in their collection efforts.



Court Clerk Sharon Casebolt and C.A. Leisa Kill have increased Osage County collections from \$690,000 in FY00 to \$927,000 in FY03. Judge J.R. Pearman oversees the collection program in this county of 42,840.

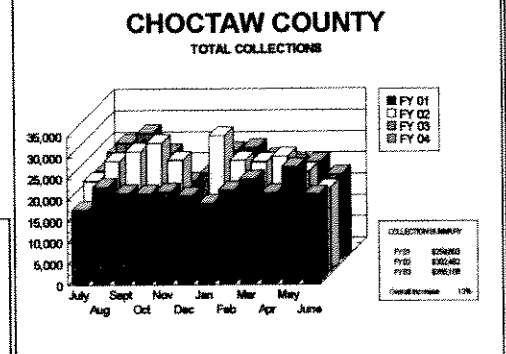


Ottawa County increased collections from \$725,000 in FY00 to over \$1 million in FY02 – with a county population of only 30,940. Court Clerk Beverly Stepp and C.A. Colleen Daugherty work with Judge Robert Haney to administer the program.

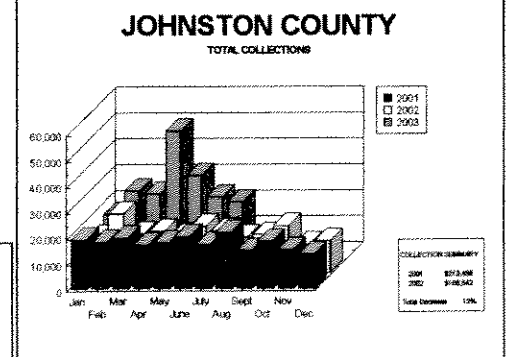


Roger Mills County has a population of only 3,580, and did not hire an additional employee as Collection Administrator. That, coupled with a serious decline in caseload, explains why Roger Mills County actually shows a decrease in collections from \$115,000 in FY00 to \$98,000 in FY02.

## FY02 Counties



Choctaw County, with a population of 15,080, increased collections from \$259,000 in FY01 to \$302,000 in FY02. Judges Gary Brock and Don Ed Payne support Court Clerk Jimmy Walker and C.A. Becky Cathey.



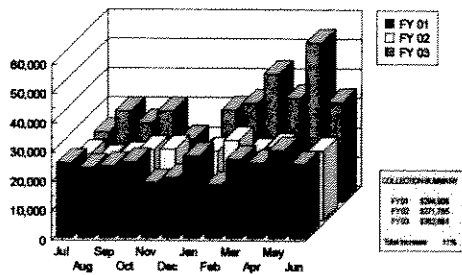
Johnston County, also, implemented the program in January of 2002. Although collections on felony and misdemeanor cases were up, traffic

caseload decreased by 50% in 2002. Judge Robert Highsmith assists Court Clerk Judy Beavers and C.A. Shelli Dodd in this county of 10,350.

program, which has seen collections grow from \$587,000 in FY01 to \$771,000 in FY02. Future plans include the training of another clerk in the collection program to work out of the Court Clerk's satellite office in Henrietta.

### MURRAY COUNTY

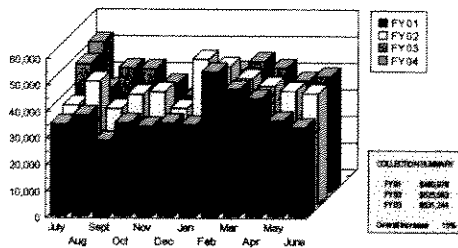
TOTAL COLLECTIONS



Murray County Court Clerk Jo Freeman and C.A. Christie Pittman, along with District Judge John Scaggs, attended training in 2001. Their collections in FY02 were down somewhat due to declining caseload, however, their collections for FY03 were over \$382,000. This county of 12,340 is on track to be a successful collection county.

### PONTOTOC COUNTY

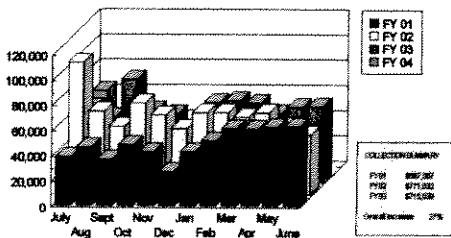
TOTAL COLLECTIONS



Judge John David Miller oversees collections in Pontotoc County, which has a population of 34,590. FY01 collections were \$460,000; collections for FY02 were over \$525,000. Court Clerk Janis Rowsey and C.A. Janice Manuel started the program in July of 2001.

### OKMULGEE COUNTY

TOTAL COLLECTIONS



Okmulgee County, with a population of 38,860, has had the greatest success of any of the newest counties. Court Clerk Linda Beaver and C.A. Lisa Laughlin work closely with Judge Duane Woodliff to administer the